

Washington, DC – Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR-04) today joined with a delegation of West Coast Congressional Members in sending a letter to Obama Administration officials urging them to restore funding for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund in the President’s Fiscal Year 2010 budget request. The President’s budget request, which was made public Thursday, eliminates the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, a dedicated resource for Western states to restore salmon and steelhead populations.

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“Salmon fishing is a critical part of the Oregon economy. Recent closures of the salmon season have made it nearly impossible for fisherman in my district to make ends meet,” DeFazio said. “Recovering salmon populations and putting fisherman back to work is imperative to the south coast. I look forward to working with the Administration to restore the program funding.”

The full text of the letter sent to key Administration officials and the full list of signers follows:

Dear Director Orszag, Secretary Locke and Administrator Lubchenco:

We are writing today to express our deep disappointment that the President’s Fiscal Year 2010 budget request eliminates the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) and to request a budget amendment to restore this critical program funding.

The PCSRF was created by Congress in Fiscal Year 2000 to address the need to protect, restore and conserve Pacific salmon and steelhead, and their habitat in the states of Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Alaska, and Nevada.

On the West Coast and especially in the Pacific Northwest, salmon are part of our heritage, our culture and our economy. Salmon are a link to our past, and it will require a generational effort to recover these iconic species. The PCSRF takes that long view, and focuses on measurable results.

Past program funding has resulted in impressive accomplishments in local and state salmon recovery efforts. Federal funding, together with state and local resources, has allowed local citizens and officials to initiate thousands of restoration and conservation projects, including hatchery reform, within our states. In 2008, every federal dollar spent on this program leveraged about 2 local and state dollars.

The majority of these projects, developed using a “bottom up” approach, focus on direct improvements to habitat for salmon and steelhead, resulting in more than 500,000 acres of restored habitat, and approximately 3,575 opened stream miles. This form of citizen involvement is exactly the type of commitment needed to succeed in protecting and restoring these important species of fish that are so integral to the economic and ecological well-being of our states.

Funds have also been used for on-the-ground restoration projects, ranging from culvert replacement at single sites to erosion control over large areas, and have generated hundreds of jobs for unemployed timber workers while producing additional economic benefits over time as they contribute to the recovery of commercially and recreationally important species. In particular, the jobs produced by road decommissioning, re-vegetation efforts and fish passage projects represent valuable employment opportunities in today’s depressed job market.

The National Marine Fisheries Service developed and implemented six program performance goals and numerous performance measures that are monitored on an annual basis to assure federal and state funds are being used responsibly and effectively. Real progress toward salmon recovery is being made, as noted in the 2008 National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration Report to Congress on the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund;
"Through the PCSRF and efforts and contributions of state and tribal partners, progress is being made in the overall recovery of Pacific salmon and steelhead. Continued commitment, collaboration and resources are required to achieve the overarching goal of full recovery and sustainability."

Recovering our salmon populations to continue our way of life, and put our fishermen back to work is a challenge that we on the West Coast take seriously, and we remain committed to its success. We look forward to working with you to correct this elimination and restore the program funding.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR 4th), Senator Murray (D-WA), Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Representative Norm Dicks (D-WA 6th), Senator Mark Begich (D-AK), Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID), Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Representative Adam Smith (D-WA 9th), Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Representative David Wu (D-OR 1st), Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Representative Brian Baird (D-WA 3rd), Senator Harry Reid (D-NV), Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR 3rd), Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA 6th), Representative Greg Walden (R-OR 2nd), Representative George Miller (D-CA 7th), Representative Dave Reichert (R-WA 8th), Representative Kurt Schrader (D-OR 5th), Representative Lois Capps (D-CA 23rd), Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA 7th), Representative Sam Farr (D-CA 17th), Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA 12th), Representative Jay Inslee (D-WA 1st), Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA 1st), Representative Anna Eshoo (D-CA 14th), Representative Rick Larsen (D-WA 2nd) and Senator Jim Risch (R-ID).